

Wycombe's urgent goal search continues!

Wycombe 0, Bshps. Stortford 1

WYCOMBE Wanderers' acute problem of scoring goals cost them both Isthmian League points on Saturday.

After a return to form against Hitchin in mid-week, they slumped to defeat against a tough Bishop's Stortford side.

Not for the first time this season, Wanderers did everything but score. On three occasions they had only goalkeeper Moore to beat with Stortford's defence helpless. Yet they still could not hit the back of the net.

Three goals against Tooting, four against Hitchin — the two results signalled danger even to a Stortford defence that had conceded only eight goals in the League all season. Sure enough, the chances were created regularly.

Twice Tony Amos was put through but he hit one effort wide and Moore smothered the other. Then in the second half Tony Horseman, coming on as substitute for Amos, fired the ball against the legs of the goalkeeper.

Wycombe lined up with Kevin O'Brien in goal, and Robb Williams and Paul Birdseye in the back four in place of Maskell, Delaney and Rundle — all ruled out with

By
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ankle injuries. Although their replacements, particularly Birdseye, performed well, Maskell's superior goalkicking and Delaney's knack of scoring goals from dead ball situations were undoubtedly missed.

As expected, Bishop's Stortford were strong at the back. Having held Hendon to a 0-0 draw at Claremont Road they were in a confident frame of mind on Saturday. They presented precious few problems in attack but had two chances, taking one of them and hitting the post with the other.

The first half was disappointing. For the most part play took place in midfield where Pritchard, skipper in Delaney's absence, sprayed the ball around brilliantly.

After 28 minutes Moore pulled off a diving save from Pritchard's curving drive after a quick turn had given Larry just enough room for the shot. This seemed to enliven both sides and after two quick corners, Wycombe almost snatched the lead in a goalmouth scramble, Birdseye eventually shooting high over goal.

Stortford replied through coloured inside forward Mitchell, who crashed one effort over the top. But in the last ten minutes, Wycombe, just getting into top gear, were set back with Stortford taking the lead.

A long throw by full back Dave Lawrence was flicked on inside the area and Dennis Francis nipped in to plant the ball past O'Brien, who was rooted on the goal line.

The second half was similar to that memorable match against Hendon recently, when Wycombe piled tremendous pressure after the interval.

One again, Searle did everything right in this game, except score. He is outjumping most opposition centre halves, laying the ball off well and looks to be at his best. The one thing missing is his goalscoring touch.

Mick Holifield too is creating

opportunities with his speed and the only man really out of touch is Tony Amos. After two blatant missed chances, with only the 'keeper to beat both times it came as no surprise when he was replaced early in the second half by Horseman — a difficult situation for Bodger, who was expected to work miracles.

The Blues had a lucky let off after 64 minutes when Brian Davidson curled his shot against O'Brien's post. But from the clearance Horseman almost set up Holifield for the equaliser.

It was this style of attack that looked like breaking down the visitors' defence, with Horseman and Searle flicking the ball on for the speedy Holifield.

After 71 minutes, Horseman almost provided that miracle by beating Hounsell and running 25 yards, leaving the defence standing.

Tony survived a trip from behind, steadied himself and shot powerfully towards the corner. Moore came out and spread himself well, the ball striking his legs to be cleared.

Ironically Bodger's endeavour could have cost Wycombe goal. The intended trip was inside the penalty area and had he been felled, a penalty must have been awarded.

Another day Wycombe will play as well and win 4-0. But on Saturday it seemed that fate was very much against them!

WYCOMBE WANDERERS — O'Brien, P. Birdseye, D. Gamble, G. Olson, R. Williams, A. Gamble, A. Amos (sub. A. Horseman 5 mins), L. Pritchard, K. Searle, M. Holifield, J. Hutchinson.

BISHOP'S STORTFORD — Moore, M. Davenport, D. Lawrence, M. Smith, J. Still, J. Hounsell, P. Leakey, D. Mitchell, B. Davidson, D. Francis, sub. N. Bunker (not used).

Referee: K. Bray (Norwich).
Half time: 0-1. Goalscorer: Davidson (40).
Official paying att: 1,410.
(Total approx: 1,700.)